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SUBJECT: NAS MONTHLY REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2008

REF: LIMA 000281

SUMMARY

11. (U) The key developments in February 2008:

** CORAH has eradicated a total of 1,615 hectares of coca in these first two months of 2008.

** Eradication operations continue despite cocalero protests and adverse weather conditions.

** INL A/S David Johnson met with high-level government officials in Lima and visited NAS facilities.

** Rear Admiral Craig Bone of the USCG met with his Peruvian counterparts.

** 13 PNP paramedics initiate a prevention campaign on tropical and sexually transmitted diseases in Santa Lucia for PNP and community.

** Analysis of recent news about narco-influence on the justice system and the Shining Path narco-terrorists.

** Pilot training conducted in night-vision goggles and for crew chief with the M-60D machinegun on the UH-2s.

** UH-2 performs an emergency landing due to engine problems; no one hurt but helo damage is extensive.

** Initial Entry Rotary Wing training at Fort Rucker is reduced to just 3 slots due to a cut in DOD 9201 funds.

** SUNAT is seizing more illicit cash; showing a more aggressive stance in money laundering cases.

** NAS Communications Programs works with media experts in the war of words on coca and narcotrafficking.

** Demand Reduction Program terminates NGO grant for unsatisfactory performance; new evaluation process works.
END SUMMARY

ERADICATION OPERATIONS CONTINUE IN TOCACHE AREA

¶2. (U) As of February 29, CORAH has eradicated a total of 1,615 hectares of coca--a total not reached until the end of May last year. Operations are continuing in the Tocache Province in San Martin despite heavy rains.

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT ERADICATION SITE

¶3. (U) In spite of repeated attempts by cocalero leaders to mount protests against the on-going eradication operations near Tocache, and adverse weather conditions, CORAH operations have proceeded smoothly. Often it was necessary to take preemptive, public communications initiatives to discredit would-be protestors, who, if allowed to succeed, could seriously affect the operations.

¶4. (SBU) On February 21, NAS Eradication and Police Advisors met with CORAH, DIRANDRO, DIRAVPOL and the PNP officer in charge of the Huallaga Front to discuss the next areas for eradication near Aucayacu and Tingo Maria. The joint planning session began coordinating the move to the new base camp, which will be built from the ground up, starting in mid April. Eradication operations will start as soon as the base camp is ready to accept the task force of some 700 strong. As eradication continues toward the north around Tocache, DIRANDRO will conduct intelligence gathering operations at the next site near Aucayacu to determine the logistical requirements needed for sustained interdiction operations and to minimize cocalero-related activities in the region.

INL A/S JOHNSON MEETS WITH PRIME MINISTER DEL CASTILLO

¶5. (SBU) During a 2-day visit to Peru, INL A/S David Johnson met with high-level government officials in Lima, and observed the nexus between eradication and alternative development in the San Martin area, as well as the NAS police training program (Reftel). In his meeting with Prime Minister Jorge del Castillo, the PM indicated a preference for more efficient interdiction of precursor chemicals over aggressive coca eradication. Substantial budget cuts in 2008, saying effective investment of available resources was more important than the amount. The PM was aware that most of Peru's cocaine was going to destinations other than the U.S., particularly Europe, but noted the EU had not put drug control on the May EU-Latin America Summit Agenda--something he would try to redress.

USCG Admiral Bone visits Peruvian counterpart

¶6. (U) Rear Admiral Craig Bone, Commander of the Eleventh U.S. Coast Guard District in Alameda, CA, visited Peru at the invitation of Rear Admiral F. Herrera, Commander of the Peruvian Coast Guard (PCG) from February 25 to March 1. During his stay, Admiral Bone met with the Peruvian Chief of Naval Operations and key members of the Embassy's country team to discuss CN operations and cooperation between the USCG and Peru's Naval Services. Admiral Bone engaged in extensive discussions with the PCG on a boarding-procedures agreement currently being reviewed by the GOP. In addition to visiting Peru's CG Operations Center, Captainty of the Port, Admiral Bone was accompanied by Admiral Herrera on a trip to Iquitos to inspect facilities on the Amazon River. Admiral Bone also visited SUNAT (Customs is part of this entity) facilities and received a briefing from SUNAT's Department of Control and Protection of Borders on their efforts in the sea and air ports to combat drug trafficking in Peru.

REPORTS ON NARCO-BASED CORRUPTION AND TERRORISM

¶7. (SBU) For an analysis of recent news stories about narco-influence on the justice system see LIMA 0248, and for a report on the Shining Path narco-terrorist organization,

see LIMA 0196.

PARAMEDICS TRAIN PNP AND LOCALS IN SANTA LUCIA

¶18. (U) A group of 13 PNP paramedics traveled to the Santa Lucia police base to initiate a prevention campaign on tropical (e.g., malaria, dengue, and yellow fever) and sexually transmitted diseases. As part of the PNP's community outreach program, the paramedics conducted a session for the local population, who expressed appreciation at the PNP initiative.

¶19. (U) In February, DIRANDRO destroyed 253 cocaine-base laboratories and seized 121,819 kg of precursor chemicals, 184,971 kg of cocaine base, and 659,426 kg of cocaine HCl.

AVIATION TRAINING CONTINUES AT A HIGH TEMPO

¶10. (U) Aviation training was at a high tempo during the month of February, because qualified pilots and crew chiefs are critical for support of over 700 personnel (CORAH, PNP, and the Peruvian Army) in a difficult field environment. We focused on night-vision-goggle (NVG) training to ensure that flight crews can support ground personnel in the field who may become injured, wounded, sick, or under attack by narco-terrorists. In addition, annual qualification sessions with the M-60D machinegun for crew chiefs were conducted for day and night operations from helicopters. Personnel were instructed on the Rules of Engagement--correct procedures for firing, control, and authorization to fire the M-60D from helicopters by flight crews.

HELICOPTER MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING; NO INJURIES

¶11. (U) On 24 February near the Peruvian Army base at Pichari, a UH-2 did an emergency landing due to engine problems. The pilot executed the proper emergency procedure as specified by the operator's manual and was able to land safely. No one was injured. The UH-2 will be disassembled for transport by an MI-17 helicopter by sling load to the NAS base in Pucallpa. The engine and all major components will be completely torn down and inspected due to the high engine and rotor RPM, which exceeded all normal parameters. This will be classified as an accident. A joint accident board with DIRAVPOL, DynCorp, and NAS will be convened. This accident will be expensive, because it is unscheduled maintenance, which is not included in the NAS or Air Wing budget and is not covered under the DynCorp maintenance contract.

¶12. (U) The PNP closed their fixed-wing runway at the Palma Pampa base because of ruts resulting from heavy rains. It will be reopened when the runway is repaired.

DOD FUNDING SHARPLY CUT FOR TRAINING NEW PILOTS

¶13. (U) Initial Entry Rotary Wing (IERW) training at Fort Rucker has been reduced to just 3 slots due to a sharp decrease in DOD 9201 funding for NAS-Lima. Next year, it is very likely that there will be no DOD funds available. This reduction of DOD funds coupled with the INL budget cuts will not allow NAS Lima to maintain the flight crews needed to support CN operations. New crew training is a constant due to attrition from retirements, reassignment, and other demands. Other options are being considered. As reported in past monthly reports, the most promising option is an IERW training agreement involving NAS-Bogota, MAAG-Bogota, NAS-Lima, and INL/A. Details are being staffed at this time.

SUNAT TAKES MORE AGGRESSIVE STANCE ON MONEY LAUNDERING

¶14. (SBU) On February 25, an individual on a domestic flight (Lima to Tumbes) was detained by SUNAT for carrying \$120,000

in cash hidden in female nylon stocking strapped to his body.

A SUNAT canine (NAS trained) found the money. The individual confessed to the money laundering. SUNAT is becoming more aggressive in money laundering operations; this is the second incident within the last 3 months of an illicit money seizure on a domestic flight.

¶15. (SBU) On February 22, 99 kgs of cocaine HCl were seized by SUNAT that were hidden inside wood planks going to Turkey.

The Manifest Review Unit provided the intelligence that targeted this shipment of 13 tons of planks. The cocaine was first detected by the SUNAT canines, followed by ion scanners and other procedures. A NAS-supported PNP chemist confirmed the finding. This is another example of SUNAT (Customs/IRS equivalent) effectively using NAS training for a successful seizure, and more nationalization of interdiction operations.

¶16. (SBU) In February, SUNAT seized 198 kgs of cocaine HCl at the Jorge Chavez International Airport (JCIA) and SERPOST (Peruvian Post Office). Also, 24 internal carriers (swallowers) were detained out of 533 people that went through the NAS-provided x-ray body scanner.

MEDIA EXPERTS WORK TO COUNTER COCALERO MISINFORMATION

¶17. (U) The war of words on coca and narcotrafficking is well underway in the national and regional radio and press. Coca growers are again claiming that their crops are being sprayed with herbicides and are pressing the GOP to remove coca from the list of proscribed drugs under the UN Vienna Convention. On February 15, NAS hosted representatives of the various NGOs that cooperate in our public media program at a half-day seminar at which each of them presented their program activities to the group. The group discussed media themes and the topic of focus for 2008. Everyone looked for and found opportunities to share information or cooperate in different ways to help each other advance their efforts to disseminate anti-narcotrafficking information to the Peruvian public and to defuse cocalero propaganda.

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NEW DR EVALUATION PROCEDURES PROVE THEIR WORTH

¶18. (U) On the last day of January, the grant of a well-respected local NGO was terminated by the Demand Reduction (DR) program because it became clear that it would not "make satisfactory progress toward the goals, objectives and performance measures" specified for the community anti-drug coalition (CAC) project. The grant was terminated by mutual consent. NAS's new, more rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures revealed that the CAC project was not achieving its objectives for the latter part of FY 2007 and the 1st quarter of FY 2008. A lesson learned from this situation is that an NGO may not always select personnel with the requisite management and interpersonal skills needed for a project, no matter how explicitly it is stated in project documents. NAS is planning to start another CAC in the coming months. The number of CACs now stands at 11.

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